

( 1 )

Admiral Russel's

# ★ LETTER

T O T H E

Earl of Nottingham :

Containing an Exact and Particular Relation of  
the Late Happy

Victory and Success

A G A I N S T

The French Fleet.

Published by Authority

*Portsmouth, June 2. 1692.*

My LORD,

**S**INCE your Lordship seems to think, that an Account in general of the Fleet's good Success is not so satisfactory as one setting forth the Particulars, I here send it with as much Brevity as the Matter will admit of. I must confess I was not much inclin'd to trouble you in this nature, not being ambitious to see my Name in Print on any occasion; but since it is your Lordships Commands, I am the more enclined to give you the best Information I am able of the Action, having seen several Printed Relations not very sincere.

*Wednesday* in the Evening, being the Eighteenth of *May*, standing over for *Cape de Hague*, I ordered Captain *Gilliam* in the *Chester*, and the *Charles* Galley, to lie at such a distance to the Westward of the Fleet, that they might discover any Signals made from me.

*Thursday* the Nineteenth, standing with a small Gale S. S. W. the Wind at W. and W. and by S. hazy Weather, *Cape Barflor* bearing then S. W. and by S. from me distant about Seven Leagues, between three

and four in the morning, we heard several Guns to the Westward, and in a short time I saw the two Frigats making the Signal of seeing the Enemy, with their Heads lying to the Northward, which gave me reason to think the Enemy lay with their Heads that way; upon which I ordered the Signal to be made for the Fleet's drawing into a Line of Battle; after which I made the Signal for the Rear of the Fleet to Tack, that if the Enemy stood to the Northward, we might the sooner come to engage; But soon after four a Clock, the Sun had a little cleared the Weather, and I saw the French Fleet standing to the Southward, forming their Line on the same Tack that I was upon; I then ordered that Signal for the Rear to Tack to be taken in, and at the same time bore away with my own Ship so far to Leeward, as I judge each Ship in the Fleet might fetch any Wake or Graine; then brought to again, lying by with my Fore-top-Sail to the Mast, to give the Ships in the Fleet the better opportunity of placing themselves, as they had been before directed. By eight a Clock, we had formed an indifferant Line, stretching from the S. S. VV. to the N. N. E. the Dutch in the Van, the Red in the Center, and the Blue in the Rear. By Nine a Clock the Enemies Van-Guard had almost stretch'd almost

as far to the Southward as ours, their Admiral and Rear-Admiral of the Blue that were in the Rear, closing the Line, and their Vice-Admiral of the same Division stretching to the Rear of our Fleet, but never coming within Gun-shot of them. About ten they bore down upon us, I still lying with my Fore-top-sail to the Mast. I then observed Monsieur *Tourville*, the French Admiral, put out his Signal for Battle; I gave order that mine should not be hoisted till the Fleets began to engage, that he might have the fairer opportunity of coming as near me as he thought convenient, and at the same time, I sent Orders to Admiral *Almeida*, that as soon as any of his Squadron could VVether the Enemies Fleet, they should Tack, and get to the VVestward of them; as also to the Blue, to make sail and close the Line, they being at some distance a-stern; but as soon as the Fleet began to Engage it fell calm, which prevented their so doing. About half an Hour after eleven, Monsieur *Tourville* in the *Royal-Sun* (being within Three Quarters Musquet-shot,) brought to, lying by me at that distance about an Hour and an half, plying his Guns very warmly; though I must observe to you, that our Men fired their Guns faster; after which time I did not find his Guns were fired with that vigour as before, and I could see him in great Disorder, his Rigging, Sails, Top-sail Yards being shot, and no body endeavouring to make them serviceable, and his Boats towing of him to VVindward, gave me reason to think he was much gaul'd. About two the VVind shifted to the N. VV. and by VV. and some little time after that five fresh Ships of the Enemies Blue Squadron came and posted themselves, three a-head of Monsieur *Tourville*, and two a-stern of him, and fired with great Fury, which continued till after three. About four in the Evening there came so thick a Fog, that we could not see a Ship of the Enemies, which occasioned our leaving off firing for a little time, and then it cleared up, and we could see Monsieur *Tourville* towing away with his Boats to the Northward from us; upon which I did the same, and ordered all my Division to do the like; and about half an Hour after Five, we had a small breeze of VVind Easterly. I then made the Signal for the Fleet to Chase, sending Notice to all the Ships about me, that the Enemy were running. About this time I heard several Broad-sides to the Westward, and though I could not see the Ships that fired, I concluded them to be our Blue, that by the shift of Wind had weathered the Enemy; but it proved to be the Rear-Admiral of the Red, who had weathered *Tourville's* Squadron, and got between them and their Admiral of the Blue, where they lay firing some time, and then *Tourville* Anchored with some Ships of his own Division, as also the Rear-Admiral of the Red with

some of his. This was the time that Captain *Histings* in the *Sandwich* was killed, he driving through those Ships, by reason of his Anchors not being clear. I could not see this part, because of the great smoke & Fog, but have received this Information from Sir *Cloudesty Shovel* since. I sent to all the Ships that were near me, to Chase to the Westward all night; telling them, I designed to follow the Enemy to the *Brest*; and sometimes we could see a French Ship, two, or three, standing away with all the Sail they could make to the Westward, which lasted about half an hour, it being some of our Blue falling in with some of the Ships of the Enemies in the Fog. It was Foggy, and very little wind all night.

Friday the 20th, 'twas so thick in the morning, that I could see none of the Enemies Ships, and but very few of our own. About Eight it began to clear up; the Dutch, who were to the Southward of me, made the Signal of seeing the Enemy; and, as it cleared, I saw about 32 or 34 Sail, distant from us, between two and three Leagues, the Wind at E. N. E. and they bearing from us W. S. W. our Fleet chasing with all the Sail they could make, having taken in the Signal for the line of Battle, that each Ship might make the best of her way after the Enemy. Between Eleven and Twelve, the wind came to the S. W. The French ply'd to the Westward with all the Sail they could, and we after them. About Four the Tide of Ebb being done, the French anchor'd, as also we in 43 Fathom water, *Cape Barfleur* bearing S. and by W. About Ten in the Evening we weigh'd with the Tide of Ebb, the wind at S. W. and ply'd to the Westward. About Twelve my Fore-Topmast came by the Board, having received several Shot,

Saturday the 21<sup>st</sup>, we continued still plying after the Enemy, till Four in the Morning. The tide of Ebb being done, I anchor'd in 46 Fathom Water, *Cape de Hague* bearing S. and by W. and the *Island of Alderney* S. S. W. By my Topmast's going away, the Dutch Squadron, and the Admiral of the Blue, with several of his Squadron, had got a great way to windward of me. About seven in the Morning several of the Enemies Ships, being far advanced towards the *Race*, I perceived driving to the Eastward with the Tide of Flood, between Eight and Nine, when they were driven so far to the Eastward that I could fetch them, I made the Signal for the Fleet to cut and follow the Enemy; which they all did, except the aforementioned weathermost Ships, which rid fast, to observe the motion of the rest of the Enemies Ships that continued in the *Race of Alderney*. About Eleven, I saw three great Ships fair under the Shoar Tack and stand to the westward: but making two or three short Boards, the biggest of them run ashore, who presently cut his Masts away; the other two being to leeward of him, ply'd up to him: The reason, as I judge, of their doing this was, that they could



not weather our sternmost Ships to the westward, nor get our a-head of Us to the Eastward. I observing that many of our Ships hovered about thole, I sent to Sir Ralph Delarval, Vice-admiral of the Red, who was in the Reer of our fleet, to keep such a number of Ships and Fire-Ships with him, as might be sufficient to destroy those of the Enemies, and to order the others to follow me, I being then in pursuit of the rest of the Enemy. An account of the performing that service I don't trouble your Lordship with, He having given it you already. About Four in the afternoon 18 Sail of the Enemies Ships got to the Eastward of Cape Barfleur; after which, I observed they hawled in for *Le Hogue*: The Reer-Admiral of the Red, Vice-Admiral of the Blue, and some of the Ships were a-head of me. About ten at night, I anchored in the Bay of *Le Hogue*, and lay till Four the next Morning, being

Sunday the 22d; and then I weighed, and stood in near the Land of *Le Hogue*: but when we found the Flood came, we anchored in good sandy Ground. At two in the afternoon we weighed again, and ply'd close in with *Le Hogue*, where we saw 13 Sail of the Enemies Men of War hawled close in with the shoar: The Rear-Admiral of the Red tells me, That the night before he saw the other five, which made up the 18 I first chased, stand to the Eastward.

Monday the 23d, I sent in Vice Admiral Rook, with several Men of War and Fire-ships, as also the Boats of the Fleet, to destroy those Ships: but the Enemy had gotten them so near the Shoar, that not any of our Men of War, except the small Frigats could do any Service; but that night Vice-Admiral Rook with the Boats burnt six of them.

Tuesday, 24th. About eight in the morning he went in again with the Boats, and Burnt the other seven, together with some several Transport Ships, and some Vessels with Ammunition, the Names of which Ships I am not yet able to give your Lordship any other Account of than what you have as followeth.

		Guns
Souil Royal	Count de Tourville	104
E Ambitieux,	Chevalier de la Vilette	104
	Vice Admiral of the White.	
E Admirable,	Monsieur Beuquen,	90
	Monf. Costalagon, Rere.	76
La Magnifique,	Admiral of the Blue.	76
Le St. Phillipp,	Monsieur Inferville,	
Le Conquerant,	Du Magnon,	76
Le Triumphant,	Monsieur Bellemont,	74
E Etonant	Monsieur de Septime,	80
Le Terrible,	Monsieur de Septville,	80
L Amiable,	Monsieur de Raal,	68
L Fier,	Monsieur Larfchoir,	68
Le Glorieux,	Le Ch. de Chateaumoorant,	60
Le Serieux,	Monsieur Bernier	60
Le Trident,	Monsieur Monreand,	56

As the Prisoners report, a Three Deck Ship burnt by accident, and the two following sunk; how true I don't know.

Le Prince, Monsieur Bagnetz, 60  
Le St. Paril, Monsieur Ferille. 60

Tho' these be all the Names that I have been able to learn, yet I am sure there are sixteen Ships of consequence Burnt.

Wednesday the 25th. I sailed from *Le Hogue*, ordering the Admiral of the Blue, with a Squadron of English and Dutch Ships under his command, to run along the Enemies coast as far as *Havre de grace*, in hopes that some of the beforementioned five ships that stood to the Eastward, might have been got thither, but he informs me, that upon his appearing before that place, he could perceive but one or two small Vessels. The number of the Enemies ships did not exceed Fifty men of War, by the best information, from fifty six to one Hundred and four Guns; and tho' it must be confessed that our number was superiour to theirs (which probably at first might startle them) yet by their coming down with that Resolution, I cannot think it had any great effect upon them; And this I may affirm for a Truth, not with any Intention to value our own Action, or to lessen the Bravery of the Enemy, That they were beaten by a Number considerably less than theirs; the Calmness and Thickness of the Weather giving very few of the Dutch or Blue the Opportunity of Engaging, which I am sure they took upon as a great Misfortune; and had the Weather proved otherwise, I do not see how 'twas possible for any of them to have escaped us.

This is the exactest Account that I am able to give You, which I hope will prove to Your Lordship's Satisfaction. Vice-Admiral Rook has given me a very good Character of several Men employed in the Boats, and I have ordered him to give me a List of the Names of such persons whose Behaviour was Remarkable, in order to their Reward I am,

My LORD,

Your Lordships most Faithful

Humble Servant;

E. Russel.

A Coppy of a Letter from Portsmouth, Dated May 29th 1692.

The Troops that are in and about this Town, under the Command of the Duke of Linsber, &c. designed for a Descent upon France, consists of 17000 effective Men besides three Scotch Regiments, and five Regiments that are Arrived from Ireland, so that they will compose in the whole an Army of 22000 Men

The

The main Design for this Expedition consists of 30 Mortars, 20 whole Culverins, 20 24 Pounders, 18 Field Pieces, 9000 Booms, 7000 Carcasses, and a vast quantity of other Warlike Ammunition; Sir *Martin Beckman*, goes Chief Engineer, Lievt. Collonel *George Brown*, Lievt. Coll. of the Train, Capt. *Thomas Brown*, Master of the Bombardoes, and Capt. *Leak* Master Gunner of England, is also Ordered to attend this Train, with Forty Gunners, Eighty Montrosses, Twenty Fire-Mortars, and Thirty Boombardoes, and they Expect orders every hour to Embarque, Transport Ships being already taken up for that purpose. God Almighty give Their Majesties as good Success by Land as by Sea.

The same Letter adds, that they are hard at Work, in Repairing the Damage our ships received in the Fight, and would in 14 dayes be able to put to Sea, in Order to relieve Sir *John Ashby*, and the *Dutch*, who were then Cruising on the *French* Coast.

And that the Seamen, who were on Board the *Royal Sun of France*, tells them, that, that Ship, cost the *French* King, Three Hundred Thousand Pounds Sterling. And that on the Poop, the Effigies of *Lewis* the 14th. was Curiously Carved, holding all the Confederate Princes in Chains, and by all they could learn from the Seamen, there is not killed in the English Fleet, not above 500 and above 1500 wounded. Oh that the Almighty God may have the Glory of this his so great appearance for us.

*Tuesday 22d of May*, About 4 this afternoon our Admiral made the Signal for the Long-Boats and Barges, to go a Cruising, we believe there was 150 Long-Boats and Barges, Man'd and Arm'd, every Long-Boat having on Board between 20 and 30 Men, with Musquets, Pistols and other Fire Arms, as Flunderbusses, and Cutlasses, thus arm'd we went to *Le Hague* and burnt Six Sail of ships that Night, and return'd by the light, about six the next Morning we went

and burnt the other 7 Sail, with about sixteen Sail of Merchantmen and Privateers. The Fort playing upon us very smartly all the time, and final shot playing from the shoar the *French* having a Camp. During all this action, we have Lost none but Fire-ships, but the *French* has Lost in this Engagement Twenty Three Sail.

*Tuesday, June 7th. 1692.*

This very day brings News, That the Town of *Marmur*, but not the Castle have Surrendered to the *French* sooner then it needed to have done, but at so dear a rate, as 'tis hoped will cost the *French* King his Kingdom; for the Armies were within a mile of each other, our King labouring to Attack them. The *French* King was there, but he thuffed back to *Paris*, being excused as sick of the Gour, Five Hundred Deserters came over a Sunday and Monday was seven-night, and some come away almost every day, as they can get away. It's concluded, there hath been Action ere now, and we are bigg with hopes, to receive a most glorious Account from *Flanders*, as we have had from the Fleet, which were the words our King used to encourage his Army.

Our Armado and Transport Ships are very busy in taken in men, and Materials at *Portsmouth*, to make a speedy Descent into *France*.

The English Fleet Consists of Ships sixty Three. Seamen, Twenty seven Thousand, seven hundred Twenty five. Cannons Four Thousand Five Hundred. Fire-ships and Frigats, Twenty Three.

The Dutch Fleet Consists of Ships Thirty six. Seamen, Twelve Thousand Nine Hundred and Fifty. Cannons, Two Thousand four hundred Ninety Four. Fireships and Frigats, Fourteen.

In all Ninety Nine Ships, Forty Thousand six hundred seventy five Seamen, six Thousand nine Hundred ninety four Cannons, eighty seven Fireships and Frigats

The Happy News of this Success and Victory, obtained by Their Majesties Royal Navy, over the *French* Fleet, was Received by Their Majesties Loyal Subjects of their Province of the Massachusetts-Bay in *New-England*, with all Hearty Expressions and Demonstrations of Joy; His Excellency the Governour, being absent upon an Expedition against the Common Enemy. The Lieutenant Governour, accompanied with the Gentlemen of the Council, Principal Gentlemen, Military Officers and Merchants of the Town of *Boston*, Repairing unto the Fort, the great Gallance at the Fort, and other Fortifications in and about the said Town, and at Their Majesties Castle, were Discharged, and Loud Acclamations of God Save King *William* and Queen *Mary*, and grant them a Long and Prosperous Reign, made by the whole Concurrence of People there Assembled.

F I N I S.

Boston Printed, and Sold by Benjamin Harris, at the London-Coffee-House.

1692.



